

Main Session #2 - Into the Well

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Date: 17 February 2018

Preacher: Darrell Johnson

[0 : 00] It is really my great pleasure to introduce the next speaker. Daryl Johnson has a worldwide impact as a thorough, thoughtful, careful teacher of the Bible.

Over the last couple of years, I've been able to hear him minister. A number of things stand out. One is he's skilled. That's why he's the teaching fellow at Regent College, teaching preaching and exposition and hermeneutics.

And he's been a champion of Bible teaching in key churches all throughout the city. I think the thing that has most recently stood out is his heart for the next generation.

This is a guy who's taking time to be here because he wants to invest in the next generation of leaders like us. And so it's really my great pleasure to welcome you up.

Can we join together as we welcome Daryl Johnson to be with us at Worship Central Conference?

Thank you. Hey, buddy.

[1 : 02] Love you, man. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. It is such a great joy to be with you today, worshiping the living God.

My only regret is the whole world isn't here today. That's our desire, isn't it? Jason, thank you for that introduction. And thank you for our growing friendship.

I look forward to being with you more and celebrating the gift of leadership that God has given him.

And thank you, Luke, for leading us in worship, clearly an anointing to do this.

It turns out Luke and I met together and served together in a conference in 2002, 16 years ago now.

He has grown up. I have not. I've remained the same age.

But so it's a great joy to be with you. I invite you now to step in. That's the theme. To step in further than we already have.

[2 : 07] By stepping into a story that opens up the essential dynamics of authentic worship. It's a story the Apostle John tells in the fourth chapter of his gospel.

A story with which I assume most of you are very familiar. So, will you please open your Bibles or go to your apps, whatever it is you do at your age, and turn to the gospel according to John, chapter 4.

We're going to read verses 1 through 26. John 4, 1 through 26. Listen carefully. The Holy Spirit is speaking. When, therefore, the Lord Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were, he left Judea and departed again into Galilee.

And he had to pass through Samaria. So, he came to the city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. And Joseph's well was there.

Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied from his journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water.

[3 : 30] Jesus said to her, Give me a drink. For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman, therefore, said to him, How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me for a drink, since I am a Samaritan woman?

For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

She said to him, Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you, who gave us this well and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?

Jesus answered and said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him or her shall never thirst.

But the water that I shall give him or her shall become in him or her a well of water springing up to eternal life. The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.

[4 : 43] Jesus said to her, Go call your husband and come here. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, You have said well, I have no husband.

For you have had five husbands and the one you now have is not your husband. You have said truly. The woman said to him, Sir, I perceive you are a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain. You people say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship. Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father.

You worship that which you do not know. We worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth.

For such people, the Father seeks to be his worshippers. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming.

[5 : 49] He was called the Christ. When that one comes, he will declare all things to us. And Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he. Literally, I am he who is speaking to you.

Living God, we believe that you enabled the Apostle John to accurately record this story. And we believe that you have kept this story, along with your whole word, over all of these centuries, for our good.

And I pray now, in your mercy and grace, that you will take us beyond these words, deeper into the reality of which they speak. For we pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. For such people, the Father is seeking to be his worshippers.

In his masterfully told story of Jesus meeting the woman at the well, the Apostle John, one of Jesus' first followers, paints a picture of what the living God is doing all over the world right now.

[7 : 00] John gives us a moving picture of what the triune God is doing in your world and my world every day, even when we are not aware of it.

In a word, it is seeking. The living God is seeking. The holy God is seeking. Seeking worshippers. In addition to holding together the universe he brought into being. In addition to paying attention to the movements of governments and nations. In addition to hearing the prayers spoken and upspoken of millions of people around the world.

The living and holy God is seeking. Seeking worshippers. One by one, calling people out of the world to himself, forming a people for himself, a worshipping people.

Did you hear that amazing claim that Jesus makes when the conversation with the woman at the well turns to worship? Listen again. John 4, 23. For such people, the Father seeks to be his worshippers.

[8 : 10] The verb is in the present tense emphasizing continuous action. The Father is seeking. All the time, everywhere in the world. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father Jesus knows and loves, is the seeking Father.

Always seeking. Seeking men and women to be his worshippers. Why? Well, the answer is critical to grasp. Why is the living and holy God seeking worshippers?

Because God is lonely? Because God is an egocentric narcissist who needs constant applause to feel good about himself? Because he's so absorbed with himself that he can only relate to those who fawn all over him?

No. A thousand times no. Then why is he seeking men and women to be his worshippers? Answer? Because he loves us. You see, we humans are the creature who worships.

All the time. All the time. Dogs bark. Fish swim. Horses gallop. Birds fly. And human beings worship.

[9 : 27] That is, we are the creature who is always seeking. Always seeking something bigger than ourselves. Always seeking something more ultimate than ourselves.

We are the creature who implicitly realizes that there is more to life than working and shopping and being entertained. We are the creature who is always seeking more because we are the creature who was created to worship.

We are at root, we are liturgical creatures. Or as someone has said, we are incurably religious. I mean, did you watch what happened two Sundays ago in Minneapolis, Minnesota?

Thousands of people gathered in the U.S. Bank Stadium for the Super Bowl. One of the biggest liturgical events that has ever held. 60,000 worshipers and millions more around the globe glued to their TV joining in the worship.

Worship? Yes, it was worship. For an afternoon, mere men were treated as gods, as warrior gods, as the embodiment of the longing to transcend the limits of creatureliness, and if only for a moment, touch transcendence.

[10:51] Just wait until Oscar night. We are the creature who worships someone or something all the time.

We are going to worship. The only question is, what or who? And what or who we worship determines everything else about us. Who or what we worship shapes our view of the world, shapes our values and priorities, shapes our relationships.

As James K. Smith is teaching us, we are who we love. So in His love, the living God seeks. The holy and living God seeks out and forms a people who worship Him.

Why Him? For only He, the holy and living God, can finally meet the longing of the human heart. Nothing less than God, however good, however noble, however lovely, can finally satisfy the human soul.

That is part of our grandeur as created in the image of God. Only the infinite Creator can satisfy the hunger of my finite heart.

[12:03] As St. Augustine of the 3rd century famously put it, speaking to God, he says, our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you. And so, in His love for us, the holy and living God seeks us out, forming us into a people who worship Him.

For such people, the Father is seeking to worship Him. Which says to me that as we seek to be seeker-sensitive churches, we need to become more sensitive to the seeker, to the great seeker in the equation, to the Father who is seeking.

for such people, the Father is seeking to be His worshipers. Now, in the Gospel according to John, we discover that God the Father is doing this seeking through Jesus.

The seeking Father seeks through the seeking Son. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is self-consciously the Son of the Father. He knows Himself to be, from the foundation of the world, the only begotten Son of the Father.

And in the Gospel of John, Jesus knows Himself to be on a mission. That is, He knows Himself to be sent. Sent by the Father on a mission.

[13:24] Jesus uses this verb all kinds of times. I didn't bother counting the times, but all over the Gospel of John, sent. My Father sent me. Later on in John, Jesus will say, my food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work.

Jesus of Nazareth knows Himself to be sent on a mission. Which is why, John says, chapter 4, verse 4, Jesus had to pass through Samaria.

He did? He had to? There were other routes He could have taken from Judea to Galilee. Longer routes, to be sure, but other routes, safer routes.

Why does John say Jesus had to pass through Samaria? Because Jesus is on assignment. The Father is sending Jesus to Samaria to the woman at the well whom the Father is seeking.

He had to go through Samaria. He had to. The Greek here is the word *dei*, and in every other place John uses the word, it speaks of divine necessity. He had to go through Samaria.

[14:33] He must go through Samaria to meet a woman the Father is seeking to be His worshiper. And that is what God is doing all over the world right now.

CBC and CNN and Fox News do not tell you about it. It's because they do not yet have eyes to see and ears to hear, but it is what God is doing in the midst of all the turmoil and the chaos and the violence in your world and in my world.

Now, in this moving story that John tells, we make four major discoveries. Four discoveries that inform our understanding of authentic worship.

We discover first the lengths to which God goes to seek His worshipers. We discover second the nature of the relationship God goes to such lengths to establish with His worshippers.

We discover third the incredible gift God gives to His worshippers when He goes to great lengths to find them. And fourth, we discover the quality of worship God works, goes to length to work in His worshippers.

[15 : 47] Let me say those again. We discover first the lengths to which God goes to seek His worshippers. Second, the nature of the relationship God goes to such lengths to establish with His worshippers.

We discover third the incredible gift that God gives to His worshippers when He goes to such lengths to find them. And fourth, we discover the quality of worship God goes to lengths to work in His worshippers.

It's that fourth discovery that I want to major on this morning. It is the most important. Okay, so consider each of these discoveries one at a time. Let's step in further. First, we discover the lengths to which the living God goes to seek His worshippers.

Ready? God jumps over walls. The seeking God is the wall-jumping God, jumping over any and every wall to bring us to Himself.

Jesus and His disciples had walked a considerable distance since sunrise that morning. And John says that Jesus was very weary. He was very tired. The verb that John uses expresses this sheer exhaustion from working in the field all day.

[17 : 09] Now, put that observation in the context of the whole of the Gospel of John for just a moment. What is the first line of the Gospel of John? In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, says John, and the Word was God.

Was God. All things came into being by Him, John continues, leading up to, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. God the Word became flesh and lived among us as one of us.

And one day, around noon, the Word sat by a well. Very weary, He sat by a well without the means to draw water from the well. Amazing. The one who, in the beginning, decided that two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom should combine to make water is sitting by a well, exhausted and weary and thirsty.

Who then meets a thirsty woman, a very thirsty woman. Her thirst, however, is different from Jesus' thirst.

Jesus' thirst can be quenched with water. Hers cannot. Nor can mine. nor can yours. Nor can anyone else's in our cities.

[18 : 24] Jesus knows why He is thirsty. The woman, however, does not know why she's so thirsty. And she does not know where to go to satisfy the thirst.

Apparently, she's been so disappointed attempting to quench this thirst. Like most people, she basically buries the thirst, burying it in an endless routine of busyness.

She comes to Jacob's well at the hottest part of the day, the sixth hour, says John, 12 noon. She comes, as she has, day after day, to fill her water containers.

As someone has put it, life was becoming, for her, an everlasting round of heavy water jars. See, they're so, so louscasts. At least, that's a reasonable assumption.

Coming from the village at the hottest time of the day and coming alone suggests that either she's ashamed to be with the other women or they're ashamed to be with her. As she approaches the well, she sees Jesus.

[19 : 25] He's a perfect stranger to her. She has no clue who He is. By the end of the conversation, she will have all kinds of clues. Give me a drink, He says. A brilliant move on Jesus' part.

Yes, He is genuinely thirsty and He does not have anything with which to draw the water, but He's wanting to bring this woman to another well. Had He begun the conversation where He ends it, telling her who He really is, I am, I am the I am, she would have likely dismissed Him as some kind of nuthead suffering from sunstroke.

So, Jesus begins by asking a favor. Give me a drink. Imagine that, the incarnate Creator asking for help from one of His creatures. She likely expects, she likely expected the stranger not to even acknowledge her.

After all, that's the way the villagers treated her. Or, she might have expected a lustful stare.

Instead, give me a drink. She's so caught off guard, she forgets social etiquette and speaks to Jesus without a title.

She just blurts out, how is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria? In Jesus' apparently innocent request, Jesus is jumping over a series of very high walls.

[20 : 49] He's pressing through very thick barriers. There is the racial ethnic wall. The woman is stunned that a Jew would ask for a drink from a Samaritan.

Many Jews hated Samaritans, many Samaritans hated Jews. The hostility went back 500 years. The rabbis used to say, let no man eat the bread of Samaritans, for he who eats their bread is as he who eats swine's flesh.

Give me a drink. She cannot believe her eyes. A Jew asking her, a Samaritan, for a drink of water. It's incredible. Forget this. In order for Jesus to drink, he will have to touch his hands to the cup she uses.

Indeed, he will now touch his lips to the cup she uses. Jesus is pressing through the thickest of ethnic barriers.

Jesus is jumping over the highest racial wall in history. There's more. The gender wall. How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?

[22 : 02] You, a man, ask a drink of me. She's stunned that a Jewish male even spoke to her, a Samaritan female. I mean, talk about jumping over walls. The rabbis of that day laid it down that men who wanted to be righteous and holy were never to greet a woman in public.

He that talks much with womankind brings evil upon himself and neglects the study of the law and at last will inherit hell. A woman shall not be alone with a man in an inn, not even his sister or his daughter on account of what men will think.

A man shall not talk with a woman in the street, not even his own wife, and especially not another woman on account of what women will think. You've probably heard of that group of Pharisees called the bruised and bleeding Pharisees, so named because when they saw a woman coming down the street, they shut their eyes and bumped into all kinds of walls and houses.

Pious men used to pray, O Lord, I thank Thee that that now has not made me a Gentile, a sinner, a tax collector, or a woman.

Surprise! Sitting on the edge of Jacob's well is a man whom others will call rabbi, and he's talking to a woman alone in public, and more than talking, he's drinking from her cup.

[23 : 26] When the Jesus' disciples return from getting groceries and find him in conversation with the woman, they're terrified. And the woman, shocked, but for the first time in a long time, feeling like a real human being.

I am who you say I am. Jesus does not treat women as second-class citizens. The way he relates to women was truly revolutionary in his time.

He treats women as fully human. And is this not what we see him doing in the rest of the New Testament? He even goes beyond the revolutionary thing he did by the well. He invites women to be part of the band of his disciples, something the rabbis of the first century would never dream of doing.

One New Testament scholar puts it this way. It's an unprecedented happening in the history of that time. Jesus knowingly overthrew custom when he allowed women to follow him.

Simply by saying, give me a drink, he has jumped over every wall that divides us. The woman's words are shot through with wonder. How is it that you, a Jew, a man, ask of me, a woman from Samaria?

[24 : 37] Her heart begins to soften toward him, so Jesus begins to address her deeper thirst directly. John 4.10, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

The woman, understandably, is curious. I would have been. Whatever it is Jesus means by living water, it sounds like something I'd like to drink. She's probably thinking in materialistic terms.

Living water in her mind would refer to flowing stream water versus stagnant well water. Sir, you have no bucket and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?

So Jesus clarifies. And in so doing, speaks even more directly to her thirst, to her deep thirst, to all her unfulfilled longings.

Everyone who drinks of this water in the well will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become a well in them springing up to eternal life.

[25 : 52] Whoa! What? The woman at the well is going to become a well? Again, she misunderstands. Understandably so.

Yet because her deeper thirst has been quickened by Jesus' words, she blurts out, Sir, give me this water so that I may never be thirsty nor have to keep coming here to draw water.

Whatever the living water is, this woman wants it. So do I and so do you. We'll come back to this in a moment. Then Jesus jumps over another wall, the highest wall of all, the morality wall, the sin wall, and breaks through to the very center of her soul.

Go call your husband and come back. I have no husband. Jesus responds, You said well. I have no husband for you've had five and the one you're with now is not your husband.

You have said well. You have spoken truly. And we'll come back to that in a moment too. Now why did Jesus do that? Why did he bring up that which stigmatized her in her culture?

[27 : 02] Why did he bring up that which caused her great pain? Because Jesus wants her to know that he knows who she is. And he wants her to stop living in denial.

He is the light. And when he, the light, shows up, the hidden places begin to be exposed. Not to make us feel guilty. Not to make us feel ashamed.

Not to make us feel afraid. But to bring us into the light where we can be healed and made whole. You've had five husbands. And the one you have is not your husband.

Oh no. The mask is not working with this man. He knows who I am. Still, I ask why did Jesus do that? Why did he bring up all of her shame?

My friend Earl Palmer helps here. Up to this moment in the encounter, the woman was beginning to feel loved. Right? I mean, look at all the walls. Jesus has jumped over to reach her.

[28 : 00] Now, if she had gone home before Jesus brought up the husband problem, she might have begun to doubt Jesus' love. I can imagine her as she walked back to the village wondering, would he love me if he knew me?

If he knew why the villagers ostracized me, would he have jumped over the wall to reach me? Ever felt that way? I have. Many times.

So, in order to head off that doubt, Jesus exposes what she seeks to hide. Go get your husband. It is as though Jesus was saying, dear woman, it is the real you I love.

I know who you are, and I'm offering living water to you. Do you see? Do you see the lengths to which Jesus will go to establish relationship? He jumps over any and every conceivable wall.

Racial, gender, moral, fear, doubt, guilt, shame. I know who you are. I have not made a mistake when I offered living water to you.

[29 : 05] The Father wants you to be His worshiper. And then we make the second discovery. We discover in this moving story the nature of the relationship God jumps over the wall to establish with His worshipers.

The story takes place at a well. A man meets a woman at a well. At a well. Now, in the rest of the great story, in the rest of the Bible, this happens a number of times.

A man meets a woman at a well. And each time, the same thing takes place. And what is it? Betrothal.

Engagement. Every place in the Bible where a man meets a woman at the well, very soon, a marriage goes into effect. Genesis 24.

One of Abraham's servants has been sent on a mission to find a wife for Abraham's son Isaac. He comes to a well outside the city of Nahor. The text says it was evening when women came out to draw water.

[30 : 09] A young woman comes. Rebecca is her name. Comes to the well. The servant says to her, please give me a drink of water from your jar. And one thing leads to another until it is clear that Rebecca has been chosen to be Isaac's wife.

Genesis 29. Jacob has come on a long journey. He comes to a well in the field. A young woman named Rachel comes to the well to draw water for her family and her family's sheep.

Jacob sees Rachel and he knows this is the one God has chosen for him to be a wife. Exodus 2.

Moses sits down by a well in the land of Midian.

According to the rabbis, it was noon. Just then, the daughters of the priests of Midian come to draw water. One thing leads to another and Moses ends up marrying one of the daughters before her by name.

John 4. Jesus is on a mission sent by his father. He's sitting by a well. Jacob's well. A Samaritan woman comes at noon. Not the normal time for women to come. Jesus reaches out to her to draw her into a relationship.

[31 : 15] What kind of a relationship? Why marriage? Of course. See? Do you see? Do you see what's going on? John sets us up for this in the way that he writes his gospel.

According to John, Jesus begins his public ministry where? Anyone remember? At a wedding. In Cana of Galilee. Why? Because he stands behind the institution of marriage.

Yes. But is it not because he's signaling what the mission he has been sent on is all about?

Establishing a relationship so personal, so intimate, that the only image that finally does justice is marriage.

Now, the biggest clue is what we read in the chapter just before the story of the woman at the well. John the Baptist is speaking of his ministry as the forerunner of Jesus.

I'm not the Christ, he says. I've been sent before the Christ. And then he says this. Listen. He who has the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.

[32 : 25] John the Baptist understands his whole ministry as that of the friend of the bridegroom, the best man at a wedding. At whose wedding? At Jesus' wedding.

Leaving us, as one commentator says with the question, who is the bride? Then John 4, Jesus meets a woman at a well. Oh, mercy. The father is seeking.

The father is seeking a bride for his son. This woman with the questionable past and the problematic present turns out to be one of the first human beings being called out of the world to become part of the bride of Christ in the world.

Go get your husband. I have none. How did Jesus keep himself from saying, now you do? Isaiah 54, fear not.

Fear not. You will not be put to shame. Neither be humiliated. You will not be disgraced. Your husband is your maker whose name is Yahweh of hosts.

[33 : 29] Ephesians 5, husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word that he may present to himself the church in all her glory.

2 Corinthians, I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy because I betrothed you to one husband that to Christ I may present you as a pure virgin. And so we sing in that great hymn, the church is one foundation.

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord. She is his new creation by the water and the word. From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride.

That is the nature of the relationship Jesus Christ jumps over wells to establish with us. He calls us to such a depth of relationship that the best way to describe it is bride and groom.

Holy moly! Yes, we are his sisters and brothers, right? And yes, we are his disciples, his students.

Yes, we are his friends. Later in John, Jesus will call us his friends.

[34 : 39] Yes, we are citizens of the kingdom. The list goes on. But we are also his bride. I am who you say I am. I am the bride of Christ with you.

I wonder when the woman at the well began to grasp this. It probably took a long time as it does for us. So we make a third discovery. In this moving story, we discover the incredible gift God gives us in the relationship to which he goes great lengths to establish with his worshipers.

Living water, Jesus calls it. Better than a diamond ring. Better than a golden necklace. Better than a palace filled with presents. John 4, 10 again.

If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water. Verse 14. Water that becomes in you a well springing up to eternal life.

It turns out that this living water is God himself. The Father, through Jesus, seeks us out and forms us as a people, his people in the world, as the bride of Jesus.

[35 : 54] And then he gives us himself, the Holy Spirit, the very water of life, life itself, life himself. Jesus will later say at the highest moment in the Feast of Tabernacles, John 7, 37, if you are thirsty, come to me and drink and out of your innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

And John says that Jesus spoke of the Spirit whom he was going to give those who believed in him. Would you like this water? Of course you do. It's the only water that finally satisfies.

We were created in such a way that it is the only water that finally satisfies our thirsty souls. Jesus Christ is the only well that does not run dry.

And he offers that only water that becomes a well in us gushing up to eternal life. Isn't this wonderful? Can I keep going?

Step in a bit further? Why don't you share with one another what's the best thing you've heard so far this morning? Just turn to one person. What's the best thing you've heard? Thank you.

[37 : 34] Okay. Thank you. Okay.

The woman then, the woman then raises the issue of worship. After Jesus tells her that he knows her, go get your husband, she says, Sir, I perceive you are a prophet.

Good perception. Jesus is a prophet and a whole lot more. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, in Samaria, she says. You people, the Jews, say that it's Jerusalem where you should worship. And so we come to the fourth discovery. We discover the quality of worship the Father seeks to worship, to work, in those he seeks to be his worshippers.

We discover the quality of worship the Father seeks to work in us. Sir, I perceive you are a prophet, our fathers.

[38 : 44] Now, as you may know, many commentators and preachers argue that in this point of the story, the woman is so uncomfortable that she changes the subject. It's argued she's so uncomfortable that Jesus knows her so fully that she changes the flow of the conversation.

She shifts to worship. As one theologian said, nothing like a good theological debate to avoid dealing with personal pain. But she is not changing the flow of the conversation.

Not at all. She is not shining Jesus on. Why? Here I'm held by Leslie Newbigin, Anglican missionary to India. Jesus is a prophet, and as I said, a whole lot more, but he is a prophet, and he is doing what prophets are supposed to do.

Expose us to the truth. Make us face reality. Help us see our lives in the light of the Father who is seeking us. This woman realizes she has experienced a prophetic encounter.

She needs to do something about it. She needs to go to worship. So she's not changing the subject. Not at all. She's bringing up what is right to bring up when you experience a prophetic encounter.

[40 : 07] I need to now go to worship, but where? So she naturally raises the question of place, the place of worship. Samaritans believe that the place was Mount Gezerim near Shechem where Abraham built his first altar and called on the name of the Lord.

The Jews believe it is in Jerusalem where David commanded the temple to be built and where the sacrifices were offered. Again, the woman is not trying to change the subject. She knows she's been visited by a prophet.

She's been made to face reality. She needs to go to worship, but where? Jesus takes her seriously and takes her to something more fundamental. God is spirit, he says, meaning God is not like human beings confined to one place at a time.

So because God is spirit, place is not the issue. The living God can meet human beings anywhere, even by a well on a hot afternoon. John 4, 21, woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

Jesus is telling her that the ground by the well is just as sacred as the ground at Mount Gezerim and just as sacred as the ground in Jerusalem. So is this ground on which I'm standing and you are sitting, for it is the presence of the Holy God that makes a place holy.

[41 : 35] So Jesus moves the women from the where question to the how question. How then do I worship? And now Jesus takes us all the way in. Verse 23, an hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth for such people the Father is seeking to be his worshipers.

In spirit and truth. Notice there's only one preposition. Not in spirit and in truth as though there were two different modes of worship but in spirit and truth together.

They always go together. We cannot worship in spirit without worshipping in truth and we cannot worship in truth without worshipping in spirit. Worship in spirit and truth.

And what does that mean? I think the key is the little phrase now is. An hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers will worship in spirit and truth.

Now is. Now is. what now is. Well, well, well. Now is is that the living God has come into the world in person.

[42 : 53] Now is in Jesus the living God has become a human being which is what Jesus claims at the end of the conversation with the woman at the well.

She basically likes what Jesus is saying about worship because she says, you know what, though? I'm going to wait until Messiah comes. Verse 25. I know Messiah is coming and when he comes he will declare all things to us.

And then Jesus answers verse 26. I who speak to you am he. As I said, literally it is I am the one who is speaking to you.

No version of the Bible I know brings out the startling thing Jesus says. Jesus is not just saying I'm in the Messiah you're waiting for. That is true he is but that's not all he's saying.

I am. These are the very words the living God uses when he meets Moses at the burning bush. I am. Ego ami. I am. Jesus is saying to her I am the very one you seek to worship.

[43 : 56] Now is now is now is is that the invisible God has put on a face. They who have seen me Jesus will later say have seen the Father. Now is is that the God with whom we must deal in our sin has dealt with our sin.

I say that one again. Now is is that the God with whom we must deal in our sin has dealt with our sin. Sin separates. Sin divides.

Sin creates a huge chasm. Sin erects a huge call a wall. Now is is that the God with whom we must deal has jumped over the wall. Now is is that the God with whom we must deal has taken the sin of the world upon himself.

Now is is that Jesus will go to the cross and he will cry out it is finished. Now is is that everything that needs to be done for unholy sinners to enter into a holy relationship with the holy God has been done by God.

Now is now is now is is that a result of Jesus atoning death the Holy Spirit can come and has and dwells with us and in us.

[45 : 07] Now is is that living water is flowing mercy glory and what I'm suggesting is that this now is shapes worship in spirit and truth.

So worship in truth it means to worship in light of the truth in light of the now is they who have seen me have seen the father says Jesus the father is just like Jesus just as present just as available just as vulnerable just as compassionate just as inviting which is why Richard Foster can say the father's heart is open wide and you are welcome to come in.

Foster can say that because the now is the now is is that Jesus heart is the father's heart that Jesus opened arms are the father's open arms. Worship in truth means being grabbed by the great truth that the father's heart is open wide.

The English word for worship means to declare the worth of. It comes from the old English word worth-ship. So to worship means coming into the presence of God this holy and awesome God and declaring God's worth-ship as we did earlier today.

But the Greek word that's used in our text means more. It is the word proskoneo. Now get this. Get this. Proskoneo, most frequent word for worship in the New Testament means to come forward and kiss.

[46 : 39] Worship in truth. Because the father is who he is and because the father's heart is open wide, we can come forward, declare his worth, and kiss and be kissed.

We are, after all, his son's bride. We are his loved ones and he is our lover. Now, why do we not do it? Step forward and kiss.

We hold back, do we not? At least I do. Why? Because we're afraid, right? Afraid of what? What are we afraid of? Afraid of not being worthy.

Ah, worship in truth. The truth is, in and of ourselves, we are not worthy, which is the whole point of the gospel. We who are unworthy, in and of ourselves, have been made worthy by the seeking father and the seeking son.

He makes us worthy. He declares us worthy to come forward and kiss and be kissed. Worship in truth. It means, therefore, worship just as you are.

[47 : 44] No faking it, no mask. And is that not what the woman at the well discovered? Go call your husband and come back. I have no husband.

And Jesus said, you've spoken well. You've spoken truly. She may not realize it, but in that moment, she is worshiping in truth. To worship in truth means to come into the presence of God not as my ideal self, which I can never be, but as my real self.

What a relief. I never have to go to worship and work myself up to be other than I am. Yes, I'm going to exhort myself with the psalmist, bless the Lord, oh my soul.

Come on, soul. Come on, soul. Get with the program. Shake off gloom and apathy. Think gospel truths so holy affections are ignited. But I do not have to be in the place where I'm my ideal self.

I come as I am. Broken, twisted, angry, tired, afraid. And I say, here I am, Lord. I'm not the person you want me to be. I'm not trusting you in the way you're worthy to be trusted.

[48 : 56] I'm dealing with emotional pain in all kinds of wrong ways. I'm afraid of my future, which means I'm afraid that you're not going to take care of me. But I came, and I hear, you have spoken truly.

Welcome. Worship in spirit. It means to step forward, step in, with the essential self. Spirit is deeper than the intellect.

Spirit is deeper than the imagination. Spirit is deeper than the emotion. Spirit is what we are at the core of our being. So worship in spirit, it means to come forward, engaging with the whole self, the mind, the heart, the body, the mouth, the eyes, the ears, the hands, the feet, the knees.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name, in concert with the intellect, in concert with the imagination, in concert with the emotions, but beyond, with the whole essential self.

Worship in spirit, and it means worship in cooperation with the spirit, in cooperation with the truth the spirit speaks, in cooperation with the power the spirit gives us.

[50 : 09] It means to step out onto the dance floor and move with the moves of the spirit. You see, the Holy Spirit, God the spirit, delights to help us step forward and with God the Son kiss God the Father.

So worship the spirit means realizing that as we worship, God the Holy Spirit is very active in this moment. We're not the only actors in the worship moment.

The Holy Spirit also acts. Indeed, He's the chief actor. He overcomes lethargy and weariness. Boy, it's happened to me many times. I come to worship distracted and tired.

Sometimes I don't, I think I'm not even going to be able to sing. Have you ever felt that way? Come to worship and you don't, you don't even know if you can sing. And then I say, here I am, exhausted and tired and before I know it, there is this sweet energy beginning to move in me, enabling me to sing.

That's because the Holy Spirit knows that my wholeness comes in worship. And the Spirit then frees us to move beyond our inhibitions.

[51 : 17] He frees us to enter into the depth of that longing we have for the Father and His Son. An old hymn puts it so well. I learned it in the Presbyterian church.

Listen to this. It goes like this. Spirit of God, descend upon my heart, wean it from earth through all its pulses move, stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art, and make me love thee as I ought to love.

And then this line. Teach me to love thee as thine angels love. One holy passion filling all my frame.

The baptism of the heaven-descended dove, my heart and altar, and your love, the flame.

You see, the passion of the Spirit is to fill us with the love of the triune God. Not only with the Trinity's love for us, but with the Trinity's love for the Trinity.

With the Father's love for the Son and with the Son's love for the Father. The Spirit's passion is to fill us with the Father's delight in His Son and to fill us with the Son's delight in the Father.

[52 : 27] Which tells me that when we go to worship, we go to participate in a supernatural event. Not only because we are in the presence of a supernatural person, but because a supernatural person is going to make it all happen.

An hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship in spirit and truth. For such people, the Father is seeking to be His worshipers.

And that is what is going on all over the world right now. The lover of human souls is jumping over every conceivable wall to bring us to Himself into this well that never runs dry.

Blessed be His name. Lawnff Yó